



Aloha,

Mālama Maunalua (*to care for Maunalua*) is a community organization focused on restoring Maunalua Bay in East O'ahu. In partnership with The Nature Conservancy, we are recipients of one of Hawaii's two ARRA awards from NOAA ---to restore our reefs by clearing 22 acres in Maunalua Bay of Invasive Alien Algae

This project exemplifies what can be done when four things happen:

**#1) A community rallies around a conservation priority** and demonstrates its commitment with thousands of hours of volunteerism – in our case, over the last 2 years we've had more than 3000 volunteers in Maunalua Bay removing invasive algae, mapping seagrass beds, surveying human uses and monitoring fish, water quality and watersheds and much more.

**#2) Good science happens.** In our case we were data poor. The Nature Conservancy, NOAA and the University of Hawaii Kewalo Marine Laboratory stepped in at the beginning with baseline monitoring efforts that also engaged the community. These efforts then attracted more science from University of Hawaii, USGS and others to help inform our plans and actions.

**#3) Strong management partnerships are forged.** Our early partnerships with NOAA and TNC have enabled us to build our management capability– With TNC, we were able to develop detailed conservation action plans and immediately begin baseline monitoring efforts to better understand the threats to the resources. NOAA was also an integral part of the Maunalua Bay project from the beginning, offering technical support, science and excellent advice throughout. These strong partnerships enabled us to forge additional

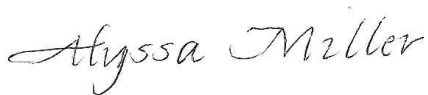
management partnerships with over a dozen County, State and Federal management entities.

**#4) Finally Federal funds are allocated to scale up the community efforts** to create major sustained restoration impact. Mālama Maunalua, The Nature Conservancy and, importantly, *the community*, demonstrated the importance of the project, proved up the method of removal and the sustainability of the results. But it is the federal funding through NOAA that allows us to scale the project to the level that tips the scale in favor of the Bay.

**Under these conditions, the restoration project becomes a rallying point for community and the Federal spending will have a multiplier effect** ---as seed money to encourage more commitment and action by the community; and as motivation for green economic development in the region.

**This model can and should be replicated throughout the Pacific Region.** The problems we face at Maunalua Bay (land based pollution, invasive species and fishery depletion) are not unique; they are ubiquitous and growing across the Pacific. There are many community groups who have and will step up to be stewards of the resources. NOAA can play a key role in guiding and supporting these community based and co-management efforts in the region. Thus we can partner to leave a legacy, not a debt, for the next generation. We ask NOAA to increase its support of communities and the co-management model.

Mahalo (thank you),

A handwritten signature in cursive script that reads "Alyssa Miller".

Alyssa Miller

Coordinator, Mālama Maunalua